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546-D GAI-13: FPCD-81-3

BY THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Report To The Secretary Of Defense

COMPLETED ORIGINAL

Automated Career Management For DOD Civilians: Performance And Potential

The Automated Career Management System, a computer-based civilian personnel inventory, appraisal, and referral system, has unrealized potential for providing information needed for day-to-day and long-range decision-making about an entire career field or an individual employee's development. DOD is not adequately using the system's capabilities.

GAO identified several weaknesses in the appraisal and referral process which must be corrected if the system is to perform effectively as a placement device. DOD must clarify the objectives of automation; specify those responsible for designing, managing, and using the system; evaluate the system's use on an ongoing basis to improve effectiveness; and train managers to use the system to the fullest.

FPCD-81-3
NOVEMBER 14, 1980

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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND
COMPENSATION DIVISION

B-200225

The Honorable Harold Brown
The Secretary of Defense

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We have reviewed the Department of Defense's (DOD's) Automated Career Management System (ACMS). This report summarizes the system's potential and problems in functioning as a placement device and management information tool for civilian work force management.

The report contains recommendations to you on pages 20-21 and 41-42. As you know, section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations. This statement must be sent to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs not later than 60 days after the date of the report. In addition, the statement must also be sent to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

We are sending copies of this report to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations and Armed Services, the House Committee on Government Operations, the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, and to the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs. We are also sending copies to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretaries of Army, Air Force, and Navy; the Director, Defense Logistics Agency; and the Director, Office of Personnel Management.

We wish to acknowledge the courtesy and cooperation extended by your staff to our representatives during the review.

Sincerely yours,

H. L. Krieger

H. L. Krieger
Director

B

GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
REPORT TO THE SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE

AUTOMATED CAREER MANAGEMENT
FOR DOD CIVILIANS: PERFORM-
ANCE AND POTENTIAL

D I G E S T

The manner in which the Department of Defense (DOD) recruits, selects, develops, and uses its civilian personnel determines its ability to provide an effective defense work force and maintain ongoing military readiness. DOD's automated career management system (ACMS) has unrealized potential as an information tool for managing the Defense civilian work force.

At the present time, ACMS is the only automated system that can provide information throughout all levels of DOD management.

It is a computer-based data inventory, rating, and promotion referral system designed to provide DOD management with the information needed to assure the proper career development and placement of civilian employees in large DOD-wide career fields.

ACMS answers three basic needs in managing defense civilians:

--It provides a common framework for appraising employee development and potential.

--It makes possible a prompt DOD-wide search for candidates to fill mid-management or higher level positions.

--It provides all levels of DOD management with consistent, comprehensive work force data.

Civilians registered in ACMS have increased DOD-wide opportunities for career development, mobility, and advancement which their local installations cannot offer. The ACMS rating and referral process is timesaving. Supervisors filling job vacancies can get

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a roster of qualified, eligible, and interested candidates within a day or two, compared to the normal 2 to 3 months for filling jobs by advertising. Additionally, it cuts down on time spent by employees, supervisors, and personnel specialists in preparing and evaluating promotion paperwork, as well as monitoring and reporting on personnel actions.

Yet, the ACMS appraisal and promotion referral process is not problem free. Employee and managerial complaints about the system's present and future uses have made it a subject of controversy. Several problem areas GAO noted were:

--Questionable objectivity of the ACMS appraisal instrument. (See p. 14.)

--Doubtful reliability of the rating system. (See p. 14.)

--Unknown validity of the appraisal and promotion referral process. (See p. 14.)

--No assurance that the evaluation and selection of candidates for promotion referral is job related. (See p. 14.)

--Supervisors' insufficient understanding and training in the ACMS rating and ranking process. (See p. 14.)

Under present procedures, getting consistent ratings from different raters may be more a matter of chance than of real performance or potential. (See p. 16.) Since DOD has no clearly defined performance benchmarks, supervisory ratings tend to be inconsistent and difficult to compare. Research indicates that the relevance, objectivity, reliability, and validity of supervisory appraisals are increased when supervisors are trained to make appraisals and avoid common rater errors. (See p. 17.)

Office of the Secretary of Defense staff and career management boards have not yet addressed these problems. Nor have officials distinguished between the purposes of ACMS appraisals and other appraisals required by DOD components. (See p. 18.)

Feedback from employees promoted through ACMS and their supervisors would help identify weaknesses and needed improvements in the ACMS rating and ranking procedures. Despite these weaknesses we do not believe that ACMS should be abandoned.

THE REAL ACMS PAYOFF

While there are obvious weaknesses in the ACMS appraisal and promotion referral process, the main problem is that management is not using ACMS for other purposes.

The real payoff of a system like ACMS is its ability to yield solid information that managers can use in making day-to-day individual and long-range work force decisions and evaluations.

ACMS can:

--Aid DOD managers in forecasting specific hiring requirements and evaluating the results of recruiting efforts. (See p. 23.)

--Help DOD managers determine disparities in grade span or skill levels of their career program personnel. (See p. 24.)

--Identify employee and organization training needs. (See p. 25.)

--Help managers to better plan, program, budget, and evaluate training programs. (See p. 25.)

--Track the career development and mobility of each career program employee or groups of employees. (See p. 28.)

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--Provide data for calculating the number of new executives needed in particular career fields. (See p. 29.)

--Help DOD managers identify equal employment opportunity problem areas and the impact of personnel actions on women and minorities. (See p. 30.)

Even more crucial to DOD's mission, ACMS could provide the information needed to determine shortfalls in critical civilian support areas as well as the availability and location of qualified replacements. It could function as a kind of mobilization skills bank, allowing better use of civilians in mobilization and wartime.

RECOMMENDATIONS

If ACMS is to continue as an appraisal and referral device, the Secretary of Defense should direct the Assistant Secretary (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics) to:

--Determine the costs, benefits, and results of DOD-wide appraisal, referral, and selection.

--Professionally validate ACMS appraisal instruments and rating and ranking procedures to insure their objectivity, reliability, and job relatedness.

--Insure supervisors are adequately trained in how to make objective appraisals.

--Clarify the relationship between the purposes of ACMS appraisals and DOD components' performance appraisals.

--Obtain feedback from individuals placed through ACMS and their supervisors to identify weaknesses and improve evaluation procedures.

--Develop a systematic, coordinated approach to researching, developing, and using appraisal instruments throughout DOD.

Making ACMS an effective management tool requires corrective actions at several DOD management levels. The Assistant Secretary (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics), DOD components, and military services should jointly:

--Redefine and restate the need for a DOD-wide automated personnel system.

--Determine what information is needed, why, and by whom in connection with management planning, performance, and evaluation of work force planning; recruitment and selection; employee, manager and executive development; equal employment opportunity; and defense mobilization planning for civilian employees.

--Evaluate the extent to which ACMS can presently satisfy identified informational requirements.

--Determine necessary system improvements to meet unsatisfied informational requirements and direct the system operators to make such changes as are needed.

--Develop specific guidance on management uses of ACMS as a general purpose personnel information system.

--Establish an organized user evaluation and feedback procedure for suggestions on innovative system use and improvements.

--Develop guidance on the interaction between DOD-wide civilian personnel information systems and component service systems, as well as between military and civilian personnel systems.

DOD functional managers in those career fields registered in ACMS should:

--Investigate the extent to which ACMS can be used to manage the civilian work force.

--Evaluate information regularly provided by ACMS and suggest improvements that would increase ACMS' use in work force planning and civilian career management.

--Take the initiative in developing new applications for ACMS, as automated data processing career field managers have.

--Investigate the use of ACMS as a tool in defense mobilization planning.

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Additional time was not taken to obtain written agency comments. The matters covered in this report, however, were discussed with officials in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics) and their comments were considered in preparing this report.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACMS	automated career management system
ADP	Automated Data Processing
CAIRS	central automated inventory and referral system
DC/ACMB	Defense Contracting/Acquisition Career Management Board
DOD	Department of Defense
GAO	General Accounting Office
MRA&L	Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Defense (DOD) employs nearly 1 million civilians who make up one-third of the total DOD work force. The DOD fiscal year 1980 budget included about $21.4 billion for civilian personnel costs. In certain critical support areas, as in automatic data processing (ADP), the majority of employees are civilians. The manner in which DOD manages, trains, and uses its civilian personnel is a significant factor in determining its ability to maintain an adequate and cost-effective defense.

COMPUTER-BASED CAREER MANAGEMENT

The first critical DOD-wide review of civilian career management was prompted in mid-1964, when the then-Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, requested a study of the career procurement work force following adverse publicity on procurement actions. He wanted to insure that DOD's massive and complex procurement function was carried out, on a continuing basis, by qualified men and women. The Civilian Joint Study Group identified the need for a computer-based career management system to assure proper civilian employee development and placement. In May 1965 the Secretary directed that the study group's recommendations be implemented, and a DOD-wide procurement career program was established to include:

1. A recruiting system to insure adequate intake of qualified personnel.

2. Mandatory training of employees at the entry, intermediate, and senior levels.

3. Mandatory appraisal and counseling of employees at least annually.

4. Mandatory use of a registration and referral system for filling management vacancies.

5. Automation of the program to the maximum extent feasible.

In June 1965 the Secretary of Defense requested the Director, Defense Supply Agency (now the Defense Logistics Agency) to serve as executive agent for those phases of the program to be automated. (The responsibilities of other DOD organizations and staffs for civilian career management are

discussed in app. I). The Secretary's memorandum stressed the need for a DOD-wide ADP system to provide an inventory of all civilian personnel registered in the career program and the capability to refer candidates for procurement vacancies. The memorandum also noted that the system should be able to accommodate future DOD civilian career programs.

Central automated inventory and referral system (CAIRS)

CAIRS was operated as an interim ADP system for employees in two civilian career programs from 1967 through March 1978. For employees in procurement and quality assurance, CAIRS had information on their education, job experience, and training. The CAIRS referral system was to provide management with a list of the best qualified candidates to fill position vacancies at the GS-13 and above levels. Its major objectives were to insure that all eligible candidates were considered for job openings and to encourage employee mobility.

CAIRS was not very successful in achieving its purposes. The system was designed to service a base-level civilian personnel office; therefore, some of its administrative features, such as the coding of registration data by civilian personnel specialists from official personnel folders, was quite inefficient when applied DOD-wide. CAIRS also failed to meet the requirements of the desired ADP system. Various studies identified the following deficiencies:

--Merit promotion procedures were questionable because they could be manipulated to insure that preselected personnel were referred.

--Potential executives could not be identified.

--Training needs could not be determined.

--Means of providing cross-component transfers was ineffective.

--Length of service was much more important in the candidate evaluation system than quality of experience.

--Registration procedures were too cumbersome to expand the system to other career fields.

--Some CAIRS procedures were inconsistent with Federal personnel policy.

On March 11, 1975, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) decided to relocate CAIRS from Hill Air Force Base in Ogden, Utah, to the Centralized Referral Activity at the Defense Electronics Supply Center in Dayton, Ohio. The move was designed to consolidate similar DOD-wide automated programs at a single location for better management and control. With the move to Dayton, the Assistant Secretary intended the CAIRS program to be redesigned and improved to resolve its many operational problems and to meet changing and more sophisticated Federal personnel policies.

Automated Career Management System (ACMS)

ACMS is the DOD-wide computer-based career management and referral system designed to replace CAIRS. Like CAIRS, it is primarily intended to give DOD management the information needed to (1) assure proper employee career development and placement and (2) plan, execute, and evaluate civilian career management programs.

Defense Logistics Agency officials calculated ACMS development costs to be $111,000, and annual operating costs to be approximately $275,000.

System status and design

ACMS began operation in July 1978 with the DOD-wide acquisition and quality assurance career fields. As of December 1979, over 29,000 acquisition and quality assurance employees were registered in the system. Of these, approximately 10,000 were eligible for promotion referral to GS-13 and higher level positions. The DOD-wide ADP career program has begun registering over 27,000 additional employees into ACMS. Other civilian career fields are also contemplating registration.

The ACMS design is largely independent of the occupation involved, thereby permitting new career programs to be added as they are developed, and specific reporting features to be tailored to management requirements. All employees (at all grades) in ACMS-covered career fields are required to register in the system. Registration consists of an employee's self-report of past and current jobs and special assignments, training courses completed, awards, and other data. The civilian personnel official responsible for registering the employee in the system reviews the registration form for correctness and complete coding of each applicable item and is supposed to update the ACMS inventory.

ACMS reports

A feature of ACMS is the series of automated reports that are available. Regularly scheduled reports are submitted monthly, quarterly, and annually. The monthly report consists of the number of registrants on a cumulative basis and details the flow of documents into and out of the system with a breakout of transactions by type and job series. The quarterly report provides profiles of each DOD component's work force, by career program. Included in the report are statistical breakouts on educational levels, age distributions, numbers of registrants by grade, projected retirements, and training information. These two reports are sent to major military commands and component headquarters as well as to various other DOD officials.

The annual report provides each activity with a profile of its work force and contains essentially the same kind of information as the quarterly report. In addition, it includes rating distributions, the number of registrants by job series, and the training completed by each registrant. Any activity or command may obtain registration information on their employees, including individual resumes, upon request. Other special one-time reports may be requested by component functional chiefs, component career management coordinators, or the various career management boards.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

We began our review of ACMS to determine the capabilities and shortcomings of an automated appraisal and promotion referral system in meeting merit system requirements. (See ch. 2.) During the course of our review, we identified other specific applications of ACMS to management planning, performance, and evaluation. (See ch. 3.) We examined the extent to which DOD management uses ACMS in civilian career management and work force planning and identified barriers to effective ACMS usage. (See ch. 4.)

We reviewed policies, procedures, and actions taken in planning, developing, and operating ACMS. We also examined DOD directives on civilian career management to determine specific management needs for an automated inventory. We reviewed ACMS forms and output documents to assess their overall usefulness to management planning and decisionmaking. We did not test ACMS output data for accuracy.

We discussed development, operation, and use of ACMS with Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) officials (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics (MRA&L); Research and Engineering); DOD functional managers in acquisition, quality and reliability assurance, and ADP; and DOD personnel representatives. Also, we interviewed officials in the Office of Personnel Management and the Federal Acquisition Institute. We contacted officials familiar with ACMS at various DOD locations throughout the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. We also performed audit work at the Centralized Referral Activity in Dayton, Ohio, where the ACMS computer system is located.

We discussed our findings with OSD officials (MRA&L) and considered their comments in preparing this report.

CHAPTER 2

USE OF ACMS FOR APPRAISAL AND PROMOTION REFERRAL

An organization's personnel appraisal and promotion system affects all employees and most personnel actions. The effectiveness of the appraisal and promotion process depends on employees' understanding and acceptance of its objectives and on supervisors' and personnel specialists' capability to carry out various technical aspects of personnel evaluation.

The use of ACMS for appraisal and promotion referral to GS-13 and higher level positions is a very controversial subject. Functional managers expressed widely divergent views--both positive and negative--regarding ACMS operations. For the most part, personnel officials believed ACMS offers a more systematic, less time-consuming approach to promotion referral than traditional job advertising methods. OSD officials responsible for ACMS operations believed that the organizational and employee benefits ACMS provides are enough to justify its continued use and improvement. On the basis of our analysis, we suggested specific technical and operational improvements to make ACMS an effective and accepted placement device.

ACMS APPRAISAL AND REFERRAL PROCEDURES

An ACMS Career Appraisal must be submitted annually for all employees at the GS-12 and above levels. Each career field uses a different career appraisal form. Employees are rated in technical areas, standard job performance factors, and managerial/supervisory abilities, if applicable. On technical factors, employees rate themselves in addition to getting supervisory ratings. There are basically six rating levels for actual performance, three for potential performance, and one level indicating insufficient knowledge on which to base a rating.

Positions are filled through a requisitioning process that uses the same technical, standard, and managerial/supervisory factors as the career appraisals. In conjunction with the civilian personnel office, supervisors assign weights to each job factor relevant to the position to be filled. These relative weights are to be assigned on the basis of their importance to the position.

Employee ratings on selected job factors are multiplied by the weight assigned to those factors, which results in a total score for each relevant factor. The employees with the highest overall total scores are considered highly qualified candidates for the vacancy. The requisitioning activity receives a promotion roster containing the resumes of the 25 employees who have indicated availability for the vacancy and who have been determined to be the best qualified candidates on the basis of ACMS rating and ranking procedures.

In addition to a requisition against the ACMS inventory, a civilian personnel office may also publish a vacancy announcement for the same position. Established merit promotion guidelines must be followed in developing this roster. Candidates may be selected from either the ACMS roster or the locally developed list.

FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS' VIEWS

Several functional managers on the Defense Contracting/Acquisition Career Management Board (DC/ACMB) were not satisfied with the ACMS appraisal and promotion referral process. Our discussions with these career board representatives disclosed a general lack of confidence in ACMS' capability to list the most highly qualified candidates for high-level vacancies. Most of these managers felt that ACMS needlessly limited their flexibility to select the personnel they believed could best get the job done.

These managers voiced the following complaints:

--Supervisors' ratings lack consistency and comparability, making it impossible for ACMS to refer the best qualified candidates for a given position.

--ACMS permits ratings of potential and employee self-ratings which are invalid indicators of performance.

--The need for DOD-wide competition to fill most vacancies is questionable when highly qualified candidates are available locally or within the component.

--The control over inflated ratings and supervisor's subjectivity in rating employees is limited.

--ACMS overemphasizes supervisory ratings and fails to weigh prior job experiences in calculating ratings.

--The link and distinction between uses of ACMS' appraisals and the services' performance appraisals are unclear.

--The appraisal criteria used in screening and ranking a candidate's experience as it pertains to a particular vacancy are too inadequate to provide a list of candidates who are all highly qualified.

--ACMS fosters inbreeding; it provides no incentives to recruiting and selecting candidates outside DOD.

The functional managers on the Quality and Reliability Assurance Career Management Board voiced more favorable reactions to ACMS than did their counterparts on the DC/ACMB. Several Quality and Reliability Assurance managers believed refinements to the ACMS appraisal form were needed to insure the referral of high quality candidates. Still, they favored staying in ACMS because it offers their careerists added mobility and more opportunities for career development and advancement than could be achieved through local merit promotion.

On the other hand, in March 1980, DC/ACMB proposed, with the concurrence of the Deputy Under Secretary (Acquisition Policy), that the ACMS appraisal and promotion referral system be discontinued. The major problem DC/ACMB identified was the inability to devise an ACMS appraisal system which can be used consistently by thousands of supervisors. In addition to this problem, the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition Policy) stated that the ACMS appraisal process is an inadequate substitute for an evaluation associated with the responsibilities of a specific position.

Under the DC/ACMB proposal, ACMS would be modified to accept employee availability and referral interests. All eligible interested candidates within DOD would then be requested to apply for specific job openings. Component and local merit promotion procedures would be followed in rating, ranking, and referring candidates.

The military components are split on DC/ACMB's proposal. The Army and Air Force, which account for 53 percent of the participating procurement work force, recommended that the present system be continued, while Navy, the Defense Logistics Agency, and small DOD agencies favored adopting the change. In light of this split, MRA&L has proposed to continue the current uniform appraisal and automated referral procedures, but test the efficacy of the DC/ACMB's proposal as an additional referral option. Specifically, the MRA&L

proposal would continue to give the user the option to (1) use either the ACMS referral list or the existing optional vacancy announcement procedures or (2) request that ACMS contact all eligible candidates and invite them to apply as DC/ACMB recommends. MRA&L has requested the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition Policy) to comment on this proposal.

PERSONNEL VIEWS

The personnel representatives on the two career boards tended to agree that the ACMS benefits outweighed its deficiencies. They consistently stated that the ACMS' rating and referral process offered better employees increased career progression opportunities and gave selecting officials a broader applicant base and much faster turnaround time than local merit promotion procedures. ACMS' rosters, they pointed out, can usually be generated in 24 hours. Using job opportunity announcements requires a great deal of paperwork and time on the part of applicants, rating panels, and civilian personnel offices. It is not uncommon for 60 to 90 days to elapse before a job opportunity announcement roster is sent to the selecting official. In the event that a position vacancy needs to be filled quickly, the time advantage of an ACMS referral is obvious.

Personnel officials were also impressed with the record-keeping capabilities of ACMS. In view of numerous administrative requirements to document appraisal and promotion decisions, ACMS can save civilian personnel offices significant time and resources by quickly and efficiently monitoring and reporting personnel actions. Also, personnel representatives believe that ACMS can be valuable in monitoring military components' implementation of certain Civil Service Reform Act provisions, such as merit pay. For example, ACMS can track distribution of merit pay awards by grade, job series, sex, etc.

According to several personnel representatives, the greatest obstacle to expanded use of the ACMS appraisal and referral process is some managers' minimal support and, in some cases, opposition to the process. All too often, supervisors do not understand or accept what the system is trying to accomplish and the role they play in the process. As a result, they haphazardly fill out the ACMS forms and then complain about the poor quality of the candidates on the ACMS rosters. The personnel representatives believe they have very little clout with managers regarding career program management. Consequently, they cannot persuade them that there are more incentives than disincentives for using

ACMS. According to some personnel officials, many managers are more interested in withdrawing from ACMS than in learning how to make the system work for them. Several personnel officials believe the best solution to this problem is for MRA&L to devote more attention and resources to training managers about ACMS' goals and operating procedures.

The personnel representatives expressed doubts about the job relatedness of some of the technical and standard factors used in rating and ranking employees. They also believed that, since no clearly defined performance benchmarks are used throughout DOD, supervisory ratings will be inconsistent and difficult to compare. These problems are, according to the personnel officials, typical of most appraisal and promotion referral systems currently in operation in DOD and throughout the Government, not just ACMS. Also characteristic of most appraisal systems, ACMS' ratings are likely to be inflated over time, and supervisors will attempt to get preselected candidates on the ACMS rosters.

Several personnel officials commented on the need to modify ACMS rating and ranking criteria so that an employee's prior work experience is given more consideration in determining promotion rankings. They pointed out that an accurate assessment of performance and potential to perform in many technical areas requires knowledge of the quality and level of an employee's prior work. The personnel representatives all favored improving ACMS. None suggested discontinuing it.

OSD OPINIONS

MRA&L (Civilian Personnel Policy) officials and Central Referral Activity staff responsible for system management told us that, while some improvements can and should be made to ACMS, the major obstacle to its acceptance is the requirement for DOD-wide competition. This requirement was established in 1965 by the Secretary of Defense for key procurement positions at GS-14 and above levels. It was based on a careful review of DOD's procurement work force and its professional development. Since that time, six authoritative studies, including two GAO reports, have supported the value of DOD-wide career management as a key ingredient to develop competent professionals and to assure their proper placement. (See app. III.)

Throughout the development, testing, and operation of ACMS, MRA&L has closely coordinated its work with the two career boards and the DOD components. MRA&L and the Central Referral Activity staff maintain continuing contact with the

career boards. ACMS has been modified as a result of comments and requests received from the career boards and the services. The most recent system modifications, in December 1979, were made to accommodate DC/ACMB's recommendations to provide selecting officials with more flexibility. These modifications included:

--Increasing to 25 the number of best qualified candidates referred on the ACMS rosters.

--Changing the minimum area of consideration for GS-13 positions from DOD-wide to the specific DOD region or overseas theater in which the vacancy is located.

--Permitting vacancy announcements to be published concurrently with requests for ACMS referral rosters and allowing selections to be made from either the ACMS roster or the locally developed list of candidates.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, MRA&L is currently considering implementing another DC/ACMB proposal to provide DOD components with an additional referral option. (See pp. 8 and 9.)

The Centralized Referral Activity staff and MRA&L officials agreed that the career boards can influence significantly those aspects of ACMS that relate to their career field, such as appraisal form content. In the early development stages of ACMS, an ad hoc committee consisting of representatives of all the major components, the career boards, OSD, and Centralized Referral Activity staff met regularly to develop the basic systems design. The Centralized Referral Activity staff developed the procurement career appraisal because DC/ACMB could not agree to take the lead in this effort. In contrast, the Centralized Referral Activity and MRA&L officials have served solely in an advisory capacity to the ADP career field, where career program managers have taken full responsibility for developing career appraisal forms.

MRA&L officials pointed out that complaints about the ACMS appraisal and referral process have been limited, for the most part, to some functional managers on the DC/ACMB. The ACMS evaluation questionnaires sent to local civilian personnel offices and selecting officials with each ACMS roster have, according to Centralized Referral activity officials, evidenced overall satifaction with the system. Even the response to a DC/ACMB questionnaire evaluating contracting officers' and selecting officials' reactions to ACMS referral did not indicate any general widespread dissatisfaction

with ACMS. According to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Civilian Personnel Policy), no one has suggested an alternative system to ACMS which would be consistent with merit principles and the Civil Service Reform Act and satisfy career program requirements for cross-component competition and career development.

MRA&L (Civilian Personnel Policy) staff has opposed the DC/ACMB proposal to withdraw from the ACMS appraisal and referral process, believing such action is premature in light of the December 1979 system modifications. These revisions and the proposal to add another referral option give selecting officials a great deal of flexibility in filling vacancies and should, in MRA&L's opinion, resolve the major complaints voiced by functional managers in the acquisition area.

MRA&L has projected that DC/ACMB's proposal to replace the uniform ACMS appraisal and referral procedures with local rating and ranking procedures would increase cost and workload significantly. For example, MRA&L estimated about 150 eligible, available employees per vacancy. For each vacancy, the 150 candidates will need to be evaluated. This will require (1) the civilian personnel office and manager to establish rating instruments for each vacancy, (2) supervisors of each candidate to complete the appraisal form each time the candidate is referred, and (3) personnel staff and local management to evaluate and rank each candidate to find the best qualified.

An example of the added workload is shown in the case of the individual who was referred 37 times during the first year of ACMS operations. Instead of being appraised once for all factors relevant to performance in most jobs, the candidate would need to be appraised 37 times. Additionally, an MRA&L official believes that far more grievances (perhaps as many as 10,000 to 20,000 a year) can be expected because more people will be referred for local rating and ranking and that the local rating process will not be readily clear to all applicants. Some of these grievances could take months to resolve.

MRA&L officials believe any decision to withdraw from ACMS should await the outcome of an ACMS evaluation. MRA&L has coordinated plans for this evaluation with DOD components and the career management boards. However, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (MRA&L) decided to postpone the evaluation for several months to give the services time to work with the revised ACMS vacancy announcement and referral procedures.

GAO EVALUATION

The rationale for a DOD-wide appraisal and promotion referral system is to (1) identify careerists with high potential for advancing to higher grade levels, (2) make sure that the best qualified careerists are referred and selected, (3) develop DOD-wide management perspectives, and (4) provide more opportunities for career specialization and promotion.

Our evaluation of the development, operation, and use of the ACMS' appraisals and the promotion referral procedures indicated several shortcomings which need prompt management attention if ACMS is to continue as a placement device. But, before investing time and resources in improving ACMS for placement purposes, OSD should determine the costs, benefits, and results of DOD-wide appraisal, referral, and selection. Does DOD-wide competition for midlevel and senior-level management positions improve the caliber of civilian managers in DOD? This issue goes beyond the scope of our work but is needed to assess whether ACMS should operate as a placement device.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTABLE APPRAISAL INSTRUMENTS

The effectiveness of any appraisal instrument depends on its job relatedness, objectivity, reliability, and validity. These qualities are critical to identifying the best qualified persons to perform or learn a job.

An evaluation instrument is job related if the work behaviors, knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics it measures are necessary for successful job performance. For example, a supervisory appraisal of performance is relevant only to the extent that the characteristics being rated are important for success on the job.

An evaluation instrument should be as objective as possible; that is, it should be structured to get factual, precise, observable responses. In addition, specific rules should be available for determining the value of each response. For example, in evaluating employees for computer operator positions, it would be more objective to ask them to list the computers they had operated and the kinds of operations they had performed on each, rather than to ask them how much they knew about computers in general. Evaluation of this type can then be systematized. The less objective a measurement procedure is, the greater the possibility that it will produce different results in repeated applications.

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the scores obtained with the instrument. Any measurement is subject to error, and the extent to which repeated measurements differ defines the instrument's reliability. Reliability can be estimated in many ways; one way is to compare the rating assigned by different appraisers. The more reliable an instrument, the less likely a person's score will be affected by chance errors.

An appraisal instrument can be reliable, but invalid. An instrument is valid if it measures the characteristics it is intended to measure. Validity is a critical requirement for selecting and using any measuring instrument.

THE ACMS APPRAISAL NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED

Assuming the continuing use of a DOD-wide appraisal and referral system, we believe that several improvements to ACMS are imperative. Generally, we found that the development and use of the ACMS appraisal instruments and the rating and referral process has not been adequately documented. Despite the lack of documentation, we noted several specific problem areas:

--The objectivity of the ACMS appraisal instrument is questionable.

--The ACMS rating system's reliability is doubtful.

--The validity of the ACMS appraisal and promotion referral process is unknown since no professionally accepted validation study has been performed.

--There is no assurance that the evaluation and selection of candidates for promotion referral is job related.

--Supervisors do not fully understand nor receive sufficient training in the ACMS rating and ranking process.

--The distinctions between the uses of the ACMS appraisals and other performance appraisals are not clear.

The objectivity of several appraisal factors is questionable, particularly the standard factors in all ACMS appraisal instruments. For example, supervisors rate employees on such traits as:

--Attitudes. (Demonstrates a positive attitude; is not easily discouraged; takes an active and positive role in seeking solutions to difficult problems.)

--Objectivity and fairness. (Considered to be fair, unbiased; and free from racial, sexual, and ethnic prejudices; retains objectivity in dealing with all people.)

--Initiative. (Is a self starter, usually meets challenges head on; exhibits energy and drive in completing day-to-day tasks; maintains an inquiring mind, willing and eager to learn; keeps abreast of developments in work-related areas.)

While these factors can be very important to successful job performance, it is impossible to measure them objectively. Each requires subjective judgment rather than a comparison of an employee's performance against generally accepted, observable performance standards. Also, the job relatedness and validity of such traits is difficult to demonstrate since their significance in successful managerial performance varies widely.

The objectivity of technical factors is also questionable. For instance, the procurement appraisal rates employees on how well they are accepted by industry representatives. Such a rating requires the supervisor to make an opinion about the attitude of undefined "representatives of industry" toward the employee. Beyond this, the factor does not require the supervisor to document or otherwise explain the bases for industry representatives' attitudes. For example, a supervisor might be capable of documenting that industry representatives acutely disliked an employee. Using the ACMS procurement appraisal, the supervisor should rate the employee low on factor 2--small business, industry relationship. However, the basis for industry's nonacceptance of the employee could be anything from unconscious racial prejudice to dislike of the employee's personal grooming. Clearly, this factor cannot be rated precisely and may be based on any standard the supervisor chooses. We believe several other technical factors yield similarly subjective measurements.

We also agree with criticisms made by several functional managers who pointed out that the ACMS rating system has doubtful reliability. The ratings assigned by different supervisors on the same factor are likely to be inconsistent. We believe this is due to some extent to the subjective nature

of the rating factors. Other reasons for questioning the reliability of the ACMS appraisal instruments include the:

--Lack of standardized norms against which employee performance can be compared.

--Lack of control over supervisory evaluations and position requisitions. It appears there are no controls to prevent selecting officials from skewing the weights assigned to particular appraisal and requisition factors, so as to give a preselected candidate an advantage.

--Differences in the ways supervisors rate personnel. Even when supervisors use the same appraisal instruments, their assignments reflect their own values, backgrounds, and orientations. Some supervisors are more lenient, others are more demanding, thus producing inconsistent ratings.

--Impact of a current supervisor's knowledge or lack of knowledge of an employee's promotion potential. The ACMS rating and ranking system gives employees lower ratings if their supervisors are unfamiliar with their performance on any given factor and therefore choose to use the "unable to rate" rating. The employees' opportunities for promotion referral can be adversely affected by such extraneous variables as the extent of the supervisor's efforts to track employee performance, number of employees working for the supervisor, opportunities to demonstrate particular skills and abilities on the job, and even the length of time an employee has worked for his current supervisor.

Clearly, under the present ACMS rating system, consistent ratings of the same candidate by different raters may be more a matter of chance than of real performance or potential.

The validity of the ACMS appraisal and promotion referral process is unknown, and we made no attempt to assess it. We believe this is an intrinsic management function of the agency. The Centralized Referral Activity undertook an informal study; however, no professionally accepted validation study had been performed.

The job relatedness of the ACMS promotion referral system depends on the content of the requisitions prepared by the selecting official and the civilian personnel office when requesting an ACMS roster. While we did not review the

requisitions submitted, no procedures currently insure that the factors weighted most heavily in any given requisition are those necessary for successful job performance. Consequently, there is no guarantee that the evaluation and selection of candidates for promotion referral is job related.

The foregoing discussion is not intended to make any statement about the relative merit of the ACMS promotion referral system as compared to any other system. In fact, discussions with personnel officials suggested that ACMS may be at least as valid, job related, objective, and reliable as any other appraisal and promotion referral system within DOD and many other Federal agencies.

Supervisory training needed

The effectiveness of an appraisal and promotion system is due not only to the technical proficiency of the system but also to the understanding, acceptance, and commitment among supervisors and subordinates. In ACMS, supervisors are the primary sources for information concerning jobs to be filled and the important requirements for successful performance on the job. Supervisory appraisals of performance are also the primary basis for rating and ranking candidates for promotion.

Supervisors must understand and support the ACMS appraisal process if it is to succeed. Functional managers we interviewed were confused about the objectives of the ACMS appraisal system, how the system works, and the role managers play in the system. The training given by the Centralized Referral Activity on ACMS policies and procedures focuses primarily on getting the managers and civilian personnel offices to correctly code information on the ACMS forms. Substantial research indicates that the relevance, objectivity, reliability, and validity of supervisory appraisals are enhanced when supervisors are trained to make appraisals and to avoid common rater errors. We believe the overall quality and results of the ACMS appraisal and promotion referral process would be improved if OSD emphasized this type of training more.

Better appraisal guidance needed

In addition to the ACMS career appraisal, acquisition and Q&RA employees at the GS-12 and higher levels are also rated under their components' performance appraisal systems. Functional managers we talked to were generally unsure about the purposes served by two appraisal systems, and they questioned the need for maintaining both. OSD policy guidance

does not clarify the purposes nor does it specify areas in which an employee's ratings on both systems should be consistent. OSD officials explained to us that the ACMS appraisal is designed primarily for merit promotion purposes. This involves predicting an employee's future performance in job duties, some of which may not be part of the present job. On the other hand, the services' appraisals of an employee's performance is based on an employee's rating in his/her current job.

Appraisals for different purposes may require different kinds of information and conflicting determinations and should therefore be prepared separately. To help supervisors and subordinates better understand the rationale for dual appraisal systems, OSD should clearly specify the relationship between ACMS appraisals and the components' performance appraisals and the purposes for both.

During our review, personnel officials discussed some of the recent initiatives to improve services' appraisal systems. While we did not evaluate the services' appraisal systems, it would appear that the variety of forms and procedures now in use throughout DOD detracts from efforts to develop and use a DOD-wide career appraisal system like ACMS. To foster DOD-wide competition for civilian managerial positions, personnel officials contended it would be more productive to devote resources to research and develop one common reliable appraisal system than to develop a reliable method for comparing ratings on many different appraisal instruments.

Several functional managers and personnel officials believed OSD should take the lead in developing a more systematic approach to researching, developing, and using appraisal instruments. DOD staffs need to coordinate their work in this area to avoid needless overlap and to insure that ongoing research benefits from past experiences.

DETERMINE HOW TO IMPROVE ACMS

A practical method of determining how to improve the ACMS appraisal and promotion referral process, which OSD has not pursued, is to follow up on the job performance of people placed through ACMS rosters. Feedback of this type can be used to identify possible weaknesses in evaluation procedures. If the employees promoted are successful on the job, their success may indicate that the method of selection has been sound. Successful placement of ACMS registrants who prove to be productive for the organization develops confidence in and support for ACMS. It is also important to survey candidates placed through ACMS rosters as well as their

supervisors to determine overall satisfaction with ACMS. Carefully analyzing the reasons for success or failure of particular persons may provide insights into the nature of the entire promotion system and directions for improvements.

OSD EVALUATION OF ACMS

OSD officials are aware of the need to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the ACMS appraisal and referral process. Late last year, MRA&L (Civilian Personnel Policy) staff prepared and coordinated with the DC/ACMB and the quality and reliability assurance career board a draft ACMS evaluation plan. The plan provides for work by a panel of functional and personnel specialists from the major DOD components and private contractors. The plan addresses many of our concerns with ACMS, as well as those expressed by functional managers and personnel specialists. The major elements proposed for evaluation include:

--A comparison of ACMS ratings and referrals with rating and ranking under component or local vacancy announcement procedures. This will include an evaluation of the comparative adequacy of the two candidate evaluation procedures with respect to their validity, reliability, objectivity, and acceptability by managers and employees.

--Internal validation of present ACMS rating and ranking procedures. This phase, to be performed under contract by competent personnel measurement specialists, is intended to determine whether the present ACMS candidate evaluation procedures meet acceptable, professional standards for validity and reliability.

--ACMS conformance with the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures and affirmative action program requirements.

--Openness of competition.

--Management and employee acceptance of ACMS referrals compared with the optional vacancy announcement procedures.

--Cost effectiveness of ACMS as a procedure to manage training requirements, placement referrals, work force analyses, etc.

--Timeliness of ACMS referrals.

--Developmental mobility. Selections from ACMS referral rosters will be compared with selections from optional vacancy announcements to determine how well the procedures provide on-the-job experience in a variety of professional specialties and settings.

--Frequency of complaints. Data will be collected through questionnaires on the number and type of management complaints.

--Review of ACMS data. The DOD functional and personnel panel would query users to assure ACMS records pertinent and sufficient employee data.

We believe the proposed ACMS evaluation, if performed properly, would deal with many of the most significant weaknesses in ACMS appraisal and referral and provide direction for system improvements. If practicable, the study should address the basic issue of costs, benefits, and results of DOD-wide appraisal, referral, and selection as part of the evaluation of ACMS cost effectiveness.

CONCLUSIONS

For ACMS to succeed as a placement device, managers and employees must be committed to the idea that DOD-wide competition for supervisory positions improves the overall quality of DOD civilian managers and offers increased career development and promotion opportunities to better employees. Feedback from employees and their supervisors is needed to develop confidence in and support for the ACMS appraisal and referral process and to identify deficiencies. To avoid confusion, OSD guidance on ACMS should clearly specify the relationship between ACMS appraisals and the component's appraisals and the different purposes of the two. DOD staffs doing appraisal research and development should coordinate their work to avoid overlap and to insure that ongoing research benefits from past experiences. Additionally, technical improvements to the ACMS appraisal instruments and supervisory training in how to properly rate employees are needed to improve the overall effectiveness of the ACMS appraisal and promotion referral process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

If ACMS is to continue as an appraisal and referral device, the Secretary of Defense should direct the Assistant Secretary (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics) to:

--Determine the costs, benefits, and results of DOD-wide appraisal, referral, and selection.

--Professionally validate the ACMS appraisal instruments and rating and ranking procedures to insure their objectivity, reliability, and job relatedness.

--Insure supervisors are adequately trained in how to make objective appraisals.

--Clarify the relationship between the purposes of ACMS appraisals and DOD components' performance appraisals.

--Obtain feedback from individuals placed through ACMS and their supervisors to identify weaknesses and improve evaluation procedures.

--Develop a systematic, coordinated approach to researching, developing, and using appraisal instruments throughout DOD.

CHAPTER 3

POTENTIAL MANAGEMENT USES FOR ACMS

A primary reason for maintaining an automated data inventory like ACMS is to provide DOD management with the information needed to carry out coherent work force planning and analysis and to assure the proper career development of employees in large DOD-wide career fields. The types and amount of information required to do this will vary as one moves up or down the DOD management hierarchy. OSD generally exercises its civilian personnel management role through oversight and coordination of broad policy guidelines. OSD and top-level component managers are most interested in aggregate career field data to aid them in overall program analysis and coordination, policy development, and supervision of policy implementation.

Personnel policy implementation takes place with major command and subordinate command staffs and in operations and support units. Within DOD, personnel authorities are delegated to commanders of over 600 installations and activities. At these levels, managers will be more concerned with information on individual employees to assist them in day-to-day coordination of persons, jobs, and training. However, civilian personnel offices also need aggregate work force data, and top-level management needs information on individual employees to effectively carry out DOD's mission.

The real payoff of a system like ACMS then is gauged in terms of its ability to generate information that can be used by DOD managers at all levels in making day-to-day individual development and long-range work force planning decisions. Our analysis indicates that ACMS is currently the only automated system which can provide this information on a departmentwide basis. ACMS provides a consistent, comprehensive data base and information framework for civilian work force planning and management of career program activities. At the same time, ACMS makes it possible to focus on individual development and career progression.

Specific applications of the ACMS inventory to work force planning and individual employee decisionmaking are discussed below in considerable detail because we believe ACMS has unrealized potential as a management information tool in these areas. (See ch. 4 for a discussion of current management use of ACMS, causes for not using the system, and recommendations for improvement.)

USING ACMS TO RECRUIT AND SELECT NEW EMPLOYEES

Effective management of any work force begins with planned, systematic intake of highly qualified personnel to replace individuals leaving the career field, meet planned expansion, and provide the skills to meet the demands of technological advances. In view of personnel ceilings, budget restrictions, and the time-consuming methods for handling employee dismissals or other adverse actions, Federal managers must be especially concerned with well-planned recruitment and selection efforts. The system of ACMS reports can assist DOD managers in forecasting hiring requirements and evaluating the results of recruitment efforts throughout DOD.

The ACMS monthly report, for example, provides a cumulative update of new career program registrations in each DOD component by job series and grade level. This data can be used to (1) determine not only the current extent of movement into the career field but also the nature of the movement by career levels--trainee, journeyman, manager, executive, (2) assist managers in planning training programs to meet the needs of new career program entrants at all levels, and (3) help predict future staffing requirements at different grade levels.

The ACMS monthly report shows for each job series and grade level how frequently specific types of personnel actions account for movement into, through, and out of a career program. Using this data a program manager can, for example, readily identify a specific staffing problem, such as high turnover in journeyman grade levels caused by employees accepting jobs in private industry. Having current knowledge of the extent and nature of personnel gains and losses at all levels, the manager can more effectively plan and target recruitment and placement efforts.

The ACMS quarterly statistics report provides additional data to help managers develop and implement their recruitment programs. It lists, for each component, the number of employees by age group and grade and gives the number of career program employees eligible for retirement within specific time periods. For example, the March 31, 1980, ACMS quarterly report shows that, throughout DOD, 965 of the nearly 16,600 procurement registrants are over 61. The optional retirement breakout indicates that 4,551, or 27 percent, of the current procurement registrant population wil be eligible for optional retirement by March 1983. This type of

information permits managers at all levels to better forecast their recruitment goals and balance their work force over a given time.

MANAGING CAREER PATTERNS AND GRADE LEVELS

Both the program manager and personnel specialists must oversee the progression of employees through the career field to assure an adequate number and mix of properly trained personnel at all levels. At the same time, the grade structure must be controlled to remain within the budget and to comply with Federal and DOD requirements.

Each DOD-wide career program specifies a range of grades for entry or trainee, journeyman, senior, and executive levels. Also, it lays out a career plan to serve as a guide for determining training and development assignments for progression in the career field. The ACMS file enables managers to analyze average grade levels as well as movement within each of the major occupational fields of the career program throughout DOD. Career program managers can readily determine significant differences in the grade span or skills and characteristics of their career program personnel compared to career personnel in other activities or DOD components. ACMS also provides a system for tracking employee training and self-development accomplishments to monitor compliance with career pattern guidelines.

Managing individual careers

The management of individual employees occupies a major part of any manager's time. While many of the problems the average manager faces may be purely mission-oriented, significant effort is spent appraising and counseling employees. The purpose of the career appraisal and counseling process is to bring into focus those factors around which the employee's development and growth can be systematically planned. Career goals, training needs, and career plans are supposed to be formulated during this process.

ACMS provides the framework for an understandable and consistent appraisal process. While people have objected to certain aspects of the ACMS appraisal instruments and procedures (see ch. 2), ACMS is a first step toward a common DOD-wide appraisal system for managers. The need for such a system has been discussed in a March 1976 study, "Strengthening Civilian Executive Development in The Department of Defense," by the National Adacemy of Public Administration, and in a GAO

report, "Military and Civilian Managers of Defense Manpower: Improvements Possible in their Experience, Training and Rewards," Volume 1 (FPCD-79-1, Feb. 16, 1979).

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Developing a qualified, competent work force requires systematic training in technical, administrative, and legal areas. Managers at every DOD level must be sure that employees are trained to carry out their responsibilities within the DOD administrative framework.

Career training and development is a joint responsibility of management and the employee. The master training and development plan for each career field outlines the mandatory and desirable training for employees to improve their technical skills and to develop potential for higher positions or assignment to another occupational area. Individual training and development needs are supposed to be determined through the appraisal and counseling process.

In the quarterly statistics report, ACMS provides several breakouts on career program training status. For example, mandatory training courses are listed by job series for entry-level, intermediate, and senior-level procurement, and quality and reliability assurance employees. The breakout shows for each component the number of employees registered at that level and, of those, the number who have taken the course or earned equivalent credit. The March 1980 quarterly statistics report shows that most procurement and quality assurance employees have not taken the mandatory courses for their grade levels. The ACMS annual report includes the training completed for each career program registrant.

The ADP career program has proposed expanded use of ACMS for managing its employee training and development activities. First, the individual development plan, currently prepared as part of the ACMS appraisal process, but not included in the automated file, would be added to the ACMS inventory. Secondly, the ACMS file maintenance forms designed to alter data in the inventory would be used to track training data and costs. This expanded use of ACMS can specifically identify organization and employee training needs, resulting in better planning and more effective use of training resources.

The automated individual development plan would capture the following training information:

--Title of the course needed by the employee.

--Course priority. (Is the training needed to accomplish the mission, for systematic employee replacement, or to increase employee's efficiency?)

--Exact source of training (in-house, private vendor).

--Reason for selecting source of training (quality, most cost effective, location, etc.).

--Purpose of training (program change, new technology, new work assignment, etc.).

--Training method (on-the-job, seminar, correspondence, etc.).

--Training time.

--Projected costs (salary, direct, and indirect).

After completing the course, the employee would complete the ACMS file maintenance form and send it to the Central Referral Activity for inclusion in the ACMS inventory. The form would follow up on the course information projected in the individual development plan, providing actual data on the course dates, source, costs, etc. This training application of the ACMS file should assist all management levels in planning, programing, budgeting, and evaluating ADP training programs.

DOD Instruction 1430.8 (dated Oct. 20, 1970) established policies for training and developing civilian managers to provide a continuing source of talent trained to manage effectively and economically the Nation's defense establishment. In our opinion, ACMS could assist in implementing and monitoring many of the policies in this instruction for registered career programs. For example, it could be used to:

--Monitor the selection of employees for manager training to assure selections are made without discrimination.

--Monitor training provided to assure personnel with management responsibilities receive managerial training on a planned basis.

--Assure, at the DOD and component level, identification, track training, and development of employees with supervisory and executive potential to assure they have greater responsibility for organization, component and DOD programs.

--Track interdisciplinary skills development.

--Identify managers needing appropriate refresher training.

--Track fulfillment of individual development plans.

--Obtain employee feedback on DOD training programs.

--Assure early identification of executives or potential executives so adequate time is available for timely completion of executive level training.

--Track cross-component training and exchange of individuals between installations, within a component and between DOD components, across functional and specialty lines.

The Defense Manpower Commission working papers noted that there had been little or no visibility at the service headquarters or OSD level of the real dimensions of civilian training requirements. Management has failed to recognize the value of civilian training because measurable standards for need and a system of accountability have not been developed. The Commission also noted that too often, on the civilian side, there has been poor use of people who have completed training. The ACMS inventory can help remedy this problem by providing more centralized, coherent control over prescribed career training. OSD and the services can use ACMS to help plan, develop, coordinate, and evaluate training activities at all levels.

Referral and selection

Civilian career program policy calls for an automated inventory to provide personnel record data to be used in referring and selecting candidates for DOD-wide position vacancies. A major objective of ACMS is to provide management with a listing of highly qualified candidates for filling these positions.

The ACMS referral and selection system is designed to provide the employee the means of identifying his/her availability for consideration by zone, region, State, component, foreign country, and even by individual activity. Requisitioning is accomplished by the civilian personnel office representative's and selecting official's identifying the factors necessary for successful performance in the position to be filled.

The ACMS quarterly report provides several statistical breakouts to monitor the components' use of the ACMS inventory for referral and selection. For each job series covered, there is a monthly and cumulative breakout by component of the requisitions processed, rosters generated, rosters returned unused, and placements by grade and type (promotion, reassignment, ACMS/non-ACMS placement). This data can assist management in determining the nature and scope of referral and selection activities throughout DOD for a particular job series and the extent to which the ACMS rosters are used for various purposes.

The Centralized Referral Activity forwards an evaluation questionnaire with each ACMS roster to gauge personnel and selecting officials' reactions to the ACMS referral and selection process. The responses received have, for the most part, been favorable. Through March 1980, most of the 63 personnel specialists and selecting officials responding after the December 1979 modifications to ACMS stated that

--the ACMS roster of 25 candidates provided a sufficient number of highly qualified candidates from which to make a selection,

--the ACMS candidates were as well-qualified as candidates referred by other merit program systems,

--a candidate was selected from the ACMS rosters,

--the ACMS resume data supplemented by interviews provided sufficient information for selection purposes, and

--the ACMS rosters were produced and received in less time than referral lists supplied from other sources or systems.

The ACMS promotion referral process makes possible a DOD-wide search to fill vacancies and, in most cases, shortens the time it takes to get a roster of candidates. It broadens the quantity and should improve the quality of the applicant base and should enhance the career progression of better employees.

MOBILITY

Career employees' movement among jobs and organizations within DOD is, according to the career program concept, a vital part of career planning. ACMS provides a recordkeeping capability to track the career development and mobility of each career program registrant, as well as groups of

employees. With current information on an employee's background readily available, managers can better plan employee movement to provide opportunities for diversified work experiences. Additionally, the ACMS monthly report identifies for each job series covered the number of cross-component placements made through the system.

ACMS' efficient retention of past and present employment information enables OSD and the services to reconstruct and compare the career progression and mobility of individual employees or groups of employees over time. This recordkeeping facilitates program analysis and evaluation of personnel policies and actions on employee mobility.

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

DOD has a continuing need to (1) forecast executive manpower requirements and identify, appraise, and counsel managers and employees with management potential, (2) train and develop managers and potential candidates for executive postions, and (3) monitor and evaluate any system that is established to meet DOD executive development requirements to determine the status and performance of employees in managerial or executive assignments.

ACMS provides an up-to-date tracking system which can identify the status, progress, and relative standing of those careerists, GS-13 through GS-15, who are registered in DOD-wide automated career programs and have been selected to participate in a component executive development group. The system allows top managers easy access; simplified, up-to-date recordkeeping; and monitoring at the secretarial and all other management levels.

Annually, each DOD career board is supposed to give components the estimated number of new executives needed in the specific career field over a 5-year period. ACMS can serve as the key informational device for making these projections. Specifically, ACMS can provide the data that career boards need to calculate expected annual attrition among their specific career executive group, expected changes in the proportion of functional skills represented by the group, and changes in the total number of executive positions. Additionally, ACMS can be used to track the adequacy of minority and female representation in component executive development groups.

On the basis of these projections, DOD components are supposed to adjust the size and mix of their component executive development groups to insure that enough potential

executives are being developed; but they are not developing executive candidates for positions that do not or will not exist.

The 1976 National Academy of Public Administration study on DOD civilian executives (see p. 24) pointed out that: "One of the more apparent needs for executive development within DOD stems from the relatively narrow career experience which constitutes the background of most civilians who reach executive positions." ACMS enables top management to track cross-functional and cross-component development of careerists and provides the information needed to better plan these movements on an individual and DOD-wide basis.

An additional application of ACMS involves its use in automating the DOD Senior Executive Service inventory and referral system. Basically, this new system application will follow existing ACMS data input, file maintenance, and requisition procedures. All DOD employees available, eligible, and qualified for positions in the Senior Executive Service will register in the ACMS inventory. Through ACMS, computerized files will be maintained on Senior Executive Service candidates, employees, and positions.

TRACKING EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS

ACMS provides comprehensive personnel information down to the installation level, making possible a more focused evaluation and monitoring of equal employment opportunity progress. This information can be used to identify and correct problem areas. It can help identify whether minorities or women are progressing in their careers at a rate comparable to white males. ACMS data can be particularly useful to the services in determining underrepresentation and exclusion in specific areas, regions, occupations, and grade levels.

A staff paper of the Defense Manpower Commission concluded that the "poor record of DOD in the areas of minority employment and utilization of women are indications that improvements are needed in the management of the civilian workforce." For those career programs registered, ACMS permits management to assess and compare the employment situation of groups and individuals DOD-wide, within and across components. The impact of such factors as geographic location, education levels, commodity experience, awards, etc., on minority and female employment within the career field can be evaluated

using ACMS data. ACMS also provides for recruiting outside DOD to accommodate equal employment opportunity considerations.

MANAGEMENT OF DEFENSE MOBILIZATION PLANNING

The prior discussion has focused on managing personnel resources generally. Information systems such as ACMS can aid management in any large organization in the ways described. However, DOD has special requirements which make ACMS, or its equivalent, essential.

DOD's mission is to provide ongoing military readiness in peacetime and rapid mobilization of the Nation's military strength in time of conflict. With modern methods of warfare, the reaction time to any crisis must be almost instantaneous. In the event of rapid mobilization, many civilian DOD employees will be recalled into the uniformed services with little advance notice. Other employees will be required to accept additional or different responsibilities to provide adequate combat support. Simultaneously, many of the persons in the uniformed services will be moved into combat, leaving even more support functions to be filled from elsewhere in DOD.

The ADP career field is unique among DOD-wide civilian career programs in that it is presently the only one to identify mobilization planning as a major program objective. Recent DOD studies and events have focused the attention of the Congress and DOD on the importance of ADP readiness to national security. ACMS will be a major information vehicle used by ADP managers at all levels in DOD to identify and plan for mobilization contingencies. Specifically, ACMS will provide the information on the reserve status, ADP technical skills, and experience levels of the registered civilian personnel within each data processing area. This information is essential to preparing comprehensive mobilization plans for staffing these installations. In case of rapid mobilization, each installation must know which key civilian positions will be affected by a reservists' callup. The installation must be able to fill, on very short notice, these positions, and those left vacant by the loss of military personnel, with technically competent personnel.

ACMS can provide the information to determine shortfalls in critical civilian ADP support areas and the availability and location of qualified replacements. It can function as a kind of mobilization skills bank, allowing better use of civilians in mobilization. ACMS will help the DOD components

insure they have adequate civilian employee inventories for each ADP occupation and experience level to satisfy mobilization and wartime manpower requirements.

CHAPTER 4

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED TO MAKE ACMS AN EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT TOOL

Annual ACMS operating costs are estimated at $275,000. In terms of DOD expenditures, this may be a small amount. However, if ACMS is not used effectively, the expenditure is wasteful. In chapter 3 we identified specific ACMS capabilities to provide informational support for management planning, decisionmaking, and evaluation in most areas of civilian career management. Discussions with MRA&L officials and career board representatives revealed no specific ongoing or proposed usage of ACMS to provide informational support for planning, coordinating, evaluating, or improving career program performance. Likewise, these groups knew little about the extent to which ACMS is used to support individual career planning and development efforts.

Even if management is committed to making ACMS work, full use of it is unlikely unless certain improvements are made. Our review indicated

--insufficient policy and procedural guidance and an inadequate tracking mechanism on ACMS' use,

--overlap between ACMS and the services' automated personnel systems, and

--a need to determine ACMS' capability to contribute to mobilization readiness.

If the potential of ACMS as an information tool for work force planning and career program management is to be realized, management must make a commitment to understand and use it. Functional managers need to investigate how other career fields, like ADP, are using ACMS and develop their own mission oriented uses.

BARRIERS TO ACMS' USE IN CAREER PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The Deputy Assistant Secretary (Civilian Personnel Policy) stated that the services are not fully using ACMS for work force planning and management analysis. He attributed this to the cultural gap which occurs when a new system is installed. An official in the ADP career field noted

that the limited work experience and background of some high-level DOD executives restrict their ability to envision the potential uses of ACMS in management decisionmaking.

Several officials told us that the promotion referral application of ACMS was overemphasized by both OSD and the services and that other equally important career management applications were ignored. One high level official felt that this might be caused, at least in part, by a lack of training directed toward increasing management's understanding and use of the system. He noted that ACMS training presently focuses on personnel office concerns and system operating procedures.

Interviews with officials outside DOD indicated that problems with ACMS usage might be symptomatic of larger problems in DOD. A Federal Acquisition Institute official stated that, while DOD is ahead of civilian agencies in centralizing demographic data on its work force, it fails to make good use of the information in the data systems. He attributed much of the problem to poor working relationships between OSD and the services as well as between the functional managers and the personnel staffs. He noted that, in the acquisition career field, there is no focal point for work force planning and career management. (In 1970 we reported on the problems with ineffectual working relationships and with the lack of a central point for career program management in the procurement career field; 1/ the problem was again noted by the Logistics Management Institute in 1976.) 2/

Many people in DOD are responsible for civilian career program management and evaluation. (See app. I.) The division of management responsibility between OSD and the services, and functional and personnel staffs has seriously compounded the problem of efficiently planning and coordinating ACMS' development. It is difficult to know what career program information is needed by these different groups. No central source has a complete overview of the programs or complete responsibility for budgeting, management, and evaluation. This fragmented structure appears to be a major factor in

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1/"Actions Required to Improve Department of Defense Career Program for Procurement Personnel" (B-164682, Aug. 13, 1970).

2/"Improved DOD Procurement Career Development Program: Reconnaissance," Interim Report by the Logistics Management Institute (Aug. 1977).

preventing OSD from designing and operating an ADP system which provides management information when and where needed for decisionmaking and program evaluation.

Currently OSD exercises its civilian career management oversight role through broad policy guidelines. It has no tracking mechanism to determine how the services interpret and implement those policy guidelines. Consequently, OSD cannot judge the impact and results of its policies, nor ascertain whether policy changes or other specific improvements are needed and by whom. Given the highly decentralized operation of civilian career programs, it would appear that OSD needs ACMS or a similar system to effectively exercise its oversight responsibilities.

LACK OF FUNCTIONAL MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Responsibility for all aspects of a DOD mission ultimately falls on the functional manager. The major purpose for personnel offices and other staff functions and personnel information systems is to assist line management in accomplishing assigned missions. While MRA&L has been deficient in providing specific direction on ACMS' potential uses (see pp. 36 and 37), it is the functional manager who must recognize the system's potential and use it.

Top level functional management in the ADP career field has recognized the usefulness of ACMS in comprehensive work force planning and evaluation. ADP management has just begun registering its employees into ACMS and is already developing specific applications of the ACMS inventory for use in peacetime and mobilization work force planning and management. In contrast, the procurement and quality assurance career fields have been registered in ACMS since 1978.

As OSD and service representatives on the acquisition or quality assurance career boards, the functional managers we interviewed are responsible for assuring coordinated planning and operation of both the DOD-wide civilian career programs and the related training and development of military and civilian personnel. Yet, discussions with them and a review of the two career boards' minutes indicated no specific plans for using the ACMS inventory to improve career program planning, management, and coordination on a DOD-wide basis.

Because of the lack of any ongoing OSD evaluation of management uses of ACMS, we were unable to determine the actual extent of ACMS usage by functional managers for purposes other than promotion referral. Central Referral Activity

officials reported receiving many individual requests for management information through the ACMS interrogation process. Specific records are not maintained on the types of information requested and its proposed use.

Need for improved guidance and management involvement

Developing an automated management information system is complex, costly, and time consuming and should be understood and controlled by top management. The developmental effort requires specific goals, planned work operations, and careful review and evaluation of system progress and problems. The development of an information system should begin by asking what information is needed, why the information is needed, and who will need the information. An automated system, in turn, should be designed to answer these questions.

Secretary of Defense McNamara first espoused the idea of computer-based career management in 1964. Since that time OSD and the services have issued many directives and instructions on the subject. However, since 1964 the Secretary of Defense has not evaluated the specific need for and goals of a DOD-wide automated career management system. DOD has allowed ACMS to develop without ever fully determining what the department needs in an automated personnel system, how ACMS will interact with other DOD and service systems, or whether ACMS is meeting its intended goals.

ACMS was developed in reaction to a specific problem--the need to assure placement of the most qualified individuals in DOD management positions. OSD has continued to concentrate on this aspect of career management, so that the need for and the capabilities of ACMS in work force planning, training and employee development, and defense mobilization planning have been overshadowed. (See ch. 3.)

Aside from its use in referring candidates for placement, specific applications of the ACMS inventory to career program planning, management, and evaluation are seldom identified, except in very broad terms. For example, the ACMS operations manual cites, as one objective, the use of ACMS for work force planning. It does not identify which OSD or component staff should use ACMS for this or how to use it.

For the ACMS inventory to have any real bearing on civilian career management, OSD guidance must clearly delineate how each level of DOD management is to use ACMS for specific planning, decisionmaking, and evaluation. As management's involvement with and usage of the system grows,

suggestions for improving ACMS and making it more responsive to management's needs should also increase. For example, experience gained through the initial registration of ADP personnel into ACMS recently prompted the OSD Director for Data Automation to suggest improvements to the ACMS registration forms and system technology.

Need to track system usage

As shown in chapter 3, ACMS clearly has the potential to provide various types of informational support to assist DOD managers in making both day-to-day and long range decisions regarding an entire career program or the career development of the individual employee. Apart from promotion referral and selection, we found ACMS' use in other areas of career program management is neither monitored nor evaluated. Consequently, it is difficult to determine (1) ACMS' responsiveness in meeting management information needs, (2) the cost effectiveness of ACMS as a tool to manage and control basic career program elements, and (3) needed changes to the ACMS data base, operating procedures, and reports to better serve DOD managers and civilian employees.

MRA&L does not systematically track, analyze, and report on management uses of the ACMS inventory. Despite this, we looked for indications that OSD and the components do, in fact, use the inventory for work force planning and analysis and career program management decisionmaking. Aside from promotion referral, these uses represent the primary reasons for maintaining an automated inventory like ACMS. However, as shown earlier, DOD managers were not aware of any ongoing or proposed usage of the ACMS inventory to support specific efforts in work force planning or to coordinate, evaluate, and improve career program performance. Likewise, these managers had no knowledge of the extent of ACMS usage to support individual career planning and development efforts.

We believe that ACMS does provide valuable career program and individual employee information which, if used properly, can lead to better individual career planning and program decisionmaking. However, the ACMS inventory is useless to OSD and the components unless the data is used by managers in a systematic way to avoid staffing problems and to enhance career development and employee performance.

Need for better coordination of related systems

Although ACMS is intended to be the DOD automated system for managing present and planned DOD-wide civilian career programs, no controls have been established to preclude the development of duplicative systems. At the time of our review, both the Army and Air Force were independently planning and developing their own automated civilian career management systems. We found no evidence that their efforts were being coordinated with ACMS. These different computerized systems may produce similar kinds of management reports; have approximately the same automated procedures and processes; and accumulate, process, and store much of the same data. Consequently, opportunities for the linking and potential integration of these systems into ACMS may exist but are not being pursued.

In developing ACMS, OSD did not review indepth the ways in which the services collect, record, analyze, and report information on their civilian personnel and the reasons for doing so. Nor has OSD determined whether ACMS can save the services time and money by providing more accurate and timely information. The services have not been made aware of how ACMS can accommodate their internal information requirements. As a result, it appears that they would rather develop their own automated personnel information systems on the basis of their needs, priorities, and funding schedules.

We believe ACMS, or a similar DOD-wide OSD system, can satisfy major automated career program information requirements of OSD and the components. High startup costs for systems' designs, equipment purchases, software development, data collection and storage, and personnel training make it imperative to reduce costs by eliminating duplicate record-keeping. DOD is aware of this need; recently, Air Force and OSD officials met to discuss the feasibility of transferring data between ACMS and the Air Force's civilian automated personnel data system.

ACMS and mobilization planning

We have reported in chapter 3 on the ADP career field's plans to use the ACMS inventory to develop mobilization staffing contingency plans. ADP management sees a direct relationship between the civilian personnel management structure and ADP mission readiness. ACMS will function as a kind of "locator" and "placement" system in times of military buildup to allow better use of civilians during mobilization.

We interviewed various MRA&L officials involved in mobilization planning activities to find out whether a system like ACMS could be used DOD-wide to improve mobilization readiness in other critical civilian support areas. We found that DOD does not have the capability to centrally monitor and manage civilian personnel working in critical support skills areas. This capability is vital to assuring that DOD will have the right number of civilian personnel with the required skills and work experiences when and where they are needed to carry out defense missions in peacetime, mobilization, and wartime.

ADP officials have proposed a contractor's study to examine all pertinent DOD manpower policies, regulations, and automated systems to develop a central, computerized approach to managing critical white collar support skills under peacetime, mobilization, and wartime conditions. ADP officials believe the study, among other things, will confirm the adequacy of the mobilization aspects of the ADP career program run on ACMS. Under the proposed study, the contractor would identify the support skills (by civilian General Schedule series and all equivalent and analogous DOD occupational groups) which should be included in the program. The primary criteria for selecting skills would be the occupational area's criticality to DOD's mobilization and/or wartime mission. The contractor would also evaluate the capability of the Centralized Referral Activity and ACMS to support this system. Specifically, the contractor would be asked to report on

--the role (if any) of the DOD Centralized Referral Activity and ACMS in developing and operating this proposed system;

--upgrades in ADP hardware, systems software, and communications required to allow the Centralized Referral Activity to effectively operate this proposed system;

--changes in current ACMS procedures, forms, functions, and capabilities required to allow ACMS to fully support DOD's proper peacetime, mobilization, and wartime personnel management information requirements in regard to identified critical (white-collar, civilian-type) support skills and occupations areas; and

--the costs required to upgrade the Centralized Referral Activity and ACMS in conjunction with this proposed system.

Support requirements must be identified to adequately plan and execute mobilization. These requirements are generally provided by installations and include such support as housing, food, clothing, ADP, transportation, and communication. It is essential to identify critical job skills necessary during mobilization and the personnel--military and civilian--qualified and available to provide them.

The Congress has focused increasing attention on the need for comprehensive manpower mobilization planning. Most recently, the DOD authorization bill for fiscal year 1981 calls for the Secretary of Defense to submit to the Congress by April 1981 a comprehensive plan for the effective management of potential military manpower during peacetime, including a plan for effective mobilization during a war or national emergency. The plan also calls for examining the establishment and maintenance of a national inventory of civilian personnel with key or critical skills. It would appear that the ADP career field's use of ACMS and its proposal to develop a DOD-wide critical support skills management information system are good first steps in addressing these congressional concerns and improving mobilization readiness. We believe a study such as that proposed by ADP officials should be undertaken.

CONCLUSIONS

ACMS is the only uniform, DOD-wide information system capable of providing, to all levels of DOD management, consistent, comprehensive data about the nature and deployment of civilian personnel in specific career fields. ACMS provides a comprehensive data collection and reporting framework necessary to plan, implement, and review a full range of personnel management activities--from recruitment and executive development to mobilization planning. We believe ACMS can function as a potent management information tool, providing the kind of data needed for control of both individual employee development and aggregate work force planning and decisionmaking.

Presently there appears to be little systematic use of the ACMS inventory for work force planning and career management. Functional managers do not fully understand and use ACMS' information capabilities. For the ACMS inventory to have any real bearing on civilian career management, OSD guidance must clearly delineate how each level of DOD management can use ACMS for specific planning, decisionmaking, and evaluation. Because no mechanism exists to monitor ACMS' usage for various career management purposes, it is difficult to determine ACMS' responsiveness and cost effectiveness as

a management information tool. Likewise, opportunities for reducing costs and improving service by linking ACMS and other DOD automated personnel systems have not been adequately pursued. Nor have the capabilities of ACMS to provide information for improving mobilization readiness been determined.

ACMS can serve as a tool for a more cohesive DOD personnel management effort by making available current DOD-wide information to appointed officials, professional military, and career civilians to enable them to work together with a common understanding of civilian personnel resources and problems. We believe ACMS is a good first step to a comprehensive civilian career management system.

If DOD is to realize the potential of an automated work force and career management system, it must clarify the objectives of automation; specify those responsible for designing, managing, and using the system; evaluate system usage on an ongoing basis to improve system effectiveness; and train managers to use the system to the fullest.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Making ACMS an effective management tool requires corrective action at several different DOD management levels. We recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics), DOD agencies, and military services to:

--Redefine and restate the need for a DOD-wide automated personnel system.

--Determine what information is needed, why, and by whom in connection with management planning, performance, and evaluation of work force planning; recruitment and selection; employee, manager, and executive development; equal employment opportunity; and defense mobilization planning for civilian employees.

--Evaluate the extent to which ACMS can presently satisfy identified informational requirements.

--Determine necessary system improvements to meet unsatisfied informational requirements and direct the system operators to make such changes as are needed.

--Develop specific guidance on management uses of ACMS as a general-purpose personnel information system.

--Establish an organized user evaluation and feedback procedure for suggestions on innovative system use and improvements.

--Develop guidance on the interaction between DOD-wide civilian personnel information systems and component service systems, as well as between military and civilian information personnel systems.

DOD functional managers in those career fields registered in ACMS should:

--Investigate the extent to which ACMS can be used to manage the civilian work force.

--Evaluate information regularly provided by ACMS and suggest improvements that would increase ACMS' use in work force planning and civilian career management.

--Take the initiative in developing new applications for ACMS, as ADP career field managers have.

--Investigate the use of ACMS as a tool in defense mobilization planning.

Additional time was not taken to obtain written agency comments. The matters covered in this report, however, were discussed with officials in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics) and their comments were considered in preparing this report.

CAREER PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Responsibilities for civilian career program management are divided among several DOD organizations and staffs. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics) is responsible for providing overall program guidance. MRA&L establishes the program; coordinates the development and evaluation of the programs; assigns specific responsibilities to the various DOD components; and issues the forms, manuals, and procedures for implementation. The Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries of Defense, the General Counsel, and the Assistants to the Secretary of Defense (also known as the Principal Staff Assistants) are supposed to identify career fields needing programs, recommend their establishment to the MRA&L, and insure their effective operation. The heads of DOD components are responsible for coordinating, implementing, and evaluating their own programs.

For most career fields there is also a DOD career management board composed of functional and personnel staff from OSD, DOD agencies, and the military services. The board is supposed to assure coordinated planning and implementation of both the DOD-wide civilian career program and the related training and development of military and civilian personnel. The career board reports to the appropriate DOD Principal Staff Assistant.

Under the head of each DOD component, there is usually a career management coordinator in the headquarters civilian personnel office responsible for career program personnel administration. There is also a DOD component functional chief responsible for componentwide career programs. The DOD functional chief has the key leadership role in career program management in support of mission requirements. For example, the Comptroller of the Army is responsible for financial management career programs for the Army. The civilian personnel offices at each DOD activity are responsible for the day-to-day personnel administration of the career programs.

APPENDIX II

GLOSSARY

Career appraisal	The process of evaluating the attributes and potential capabilities of each employee.
Career development	The development of employees' potential by integrating their capabilities, needs, interests, and aptitudes through a planned, organized, and systematic method of training and development designed to meet organizational objectives; it is accomplished through work assignments, job rotation, training, education, and self-development.
Career field	One or more occupations or functions which require similar basic knowledge and skills and are sufficiently related to be recognized as a normal career pattern for progression.
Career levels	Groupings by a range of grade levels (entry or trainee, intermediate or journeyman, senior and executive) which provide the framework for overall training and development planning and progression within a career field.
Career management	The continuing process by which individuals in specific career fields are identified and developed; administered under a formal program to fill positions of increasing responsibility in DOD and to provide management with a staff of proficient career employees to accomplish its mission.
Career patterns	The range of opportunities at each career level and the optimum pathways for vertical and horizontal movement within a career field.

Career program	A system for selecting, developing, and assigning personnel within a specified career field.
Component career management coordinator	A representative of a DOD headquarters staff civilian personnel office who has primary personnel administration responsibility within the component for career programs.
DOD career management boards	Composed of functional and personnel staff from OSD and the component services, each board is responsible for providing guidance for and assuring coordinated planning and effective implementation of the assigned career program.
DOD career program manual	A separate DOD manual written for a specific career field. It sets forth requirements and procedures unique to that career field.
DOD Component Functional Chief	The official at the DOD component level designated to assume component-wide responsibility and leadership for planning, developing, and administering career programs supporting the function or mission for which the official has primary component-wide responsibility (e.g., Comptroller of the Army).
DOD Principal Staff Assistants	The Under Secretaries and the Assistant Secretaries of Defense and the DOD General Counsel.
Executive position	A position occupied by a senior manager, usually at GS-16 or higher levels or the equivalent, who has top level managerial or staff responsibility at the Bureau or Command level in a major component headquarters or across the entire DOD.

Manager	A DOD official who directs the work of an organization; is held accountable for the success of specific line or staff programs, projects, functions, or activities; monitors the progress of the organization toward goals; and periodically evaluates and makes appropriate adjustments.
Requisition	Request for an ACMS referral roster submitted to the Centralized Referral Activity

STUDIES SUPPORTING DOD-WIDE CIVILIAN CAREER MANAGEMENT

Action Required to Improve Department of Defense Career Program for Procurement Personnel (B-164682, Aug. 13, 1970)

Civilian Joint Study Group Report to the Secretary of Defense on the DOD Procurement Workforce (1964-65)

Report of the Commission on Government Procurement - Volume One, Chapter 5 (December 1972)

Strengthening Civilian Executive Development in the Department of Defense by a Panel of the National Academy of Public Administration (March 1976)

Defens Manpower Commission Report to the President and the Congress (April 1976)

Improved DOD Procurement Career Development Program: Reconnaissance Interim Report by the Logistics Management Institute (August 1977)

Military and Civilian Managers of Defense Manpower: Improvements Possible in their Experience, Training and Rewards, Volume I (FPCD-79-1, February 16, 1979)

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